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ESUS' BANQUET



JESUS' BANQUET:

OR,

MONTHLY MEDITATIONS AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

BY JAMES SMITH,

NEWMARKET.

AUTHOR OF

"The Early Religious History of Britain."

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—I. Cor. xi. 26.

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PREFACE.

FROM whatever point of view the Lord's Supper be regarded, there is scarcely more than a single Christian sect but attaches unwonted importance to its regular and devout observance. Both as a divine institution, and a means of grace, its usefulness for edification and comfort invests it with a sacredness beyond every other ordinance of Christian fellowship. It is to be deplored that from an early date in the history of the Christian Church exaggerated ideas of the necessity and efficacy of this solemn rite have been entertained by sincere but enthusiastic persons; and even by considerable bodies of professing Christians; to the dishonour of the Saviour, the scandal of the Church, and their own most serious injury. But *it is* not to be inferred, on this account

that any one may guiltlessly underrate it, or with impunity treat it with neglect.

That the primitive church assembled in its various congregations, every first day of the week, as the Lord's day, to celebrate this feast of bread and wine, is an historic fact which scarcely admits of controversy. The practice of observing it monthly, instead of weekly, which has recently so very generally obtained in the Protestant church, is perhaps more the result of convenience and policy than of argument and principle. It was out of this change grew the subsidiary custom of observing the last week in the month as a preparation week for the following Lord's day Sacrament; when by prayer, meditation, penitence, and fasting, a devout and pious state of mind, befitting this holy festival, was thought to be acquired. Beneficial as such a usage may have been, and still may be, as practised by some, it has, for the most part, unquestionably proved auxiliary to superstition rather than to sanctity.

The sacramental treatises which have issued from the press from time to time, although designed by their respective authors to assist in preparing the communicant for a profitable approach to the table of the Lord, have, in many instances, contributed to foster, if not to create, a formal habit instead of a spiritual and heavenly frame of mind. It is possible for the succeeding age or generation to run into a contrary extreme. To guard against such a fatality is our common duty. But more especially does it devolve upon the pulpit and the press to steer the Church's barque clear of impending danger.

This little work is written for no polemical purpose. In one respect it does not follow in the wake of many which have preceded it. Presenting to the reader a series of monthly addresses for the whole year; it is suggestive of thoughts or themes of meditation *at* the Table of the Lord, rather than preparatory for it. Slightly altered, all have been spoken on Sacramental



PREFACE.

A few of the series having
h acceptance in a monthly
led to an extension of their
to this their publication in a
orm. Its care is to raise devo-
gs, not doctrinal disputations; to
tranquilize the passions, not to
d vex them; to command the
of the Holy Ghost, not to drive
ager from the soul. It is offered
ndividual members of every evan-
mmunion. With their distinctive
their peculiarities in doctrine,
urch-government, and discipline, it
meddle. It assumes the unity
of Christ. For, as on the Lord's
rchants, traders, mechanics, arti-
labourers are not so distinguish
heir garb and conversation as o
ing day; so at the table of th
least temporarily, are laid asi
rm and shibboleths of the Churc
ism.

istians of different temperame

rather than of different creeds, the Lord's Supper is differently regarded. As to a commemorative rite; a family festival; a love feast; a sacramental occasion of personal dedication by covenant, oath, or vow; a sacred symbol of the actual presence of the Redeemer in the Church; or barely as to a means of grace, so come evangelical believers to His table. This their Canticle in common—"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies."—Cant. vi. 3.

That "the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood," (Acts xx. 28) may accept this humble but hearty token of Christian love, and derive from its perusal some amount of spiritual profit and delight, our adorable Redeemer being glorified thereby, is the desire of their servant for His sake,

JAMES SMITH.

THE MOUNT, NEWMARKET,
January 1, 1878.

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JANUARY.

THE MEMORIAL.

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and hall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your rations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ."—Exodus xii. 14.

ARS change. Ages roll on. Time nears dissolution. But the Lord of the Feast "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and lay, and for ever." Heb. xiii. 8. We alter. cumstances vary. Assuming a new as- t, or mouldering in decay, every sensible ect evinces a mutability common to thly things. But the love of Jesus er wearies. Divine grace never tires. covenant abides for ever. Thus thinking

let the new year's first Lord's day find me at his table. The banquet is prepared. The guest-chamber is furnished with guests. The Master of the feast listens for my song of praise. There would I renew the sacred pleasure which his presence ministers. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." Ps. xliii. 4.

I will tender him all my love. The season of the year invites affection's offering. This feast of loves affords a fit occasion. The memory of former joys is sweet; indispensable is their return. Now as aforetime, help us, O Jesus, to hymn with the our Father's glories. Declare to us h name. Conform us to his image. Breath on us again the Holy Ghost. Nearer thee cause me to draw nigh. Give a accept affection's reiterated pledges. " me as a seal upon thine heart, as a upon thine arm: for love is strong as dea *Cant. viii. 6.* For who but the Lord J *is my all in all?* the fount of my bliss

source of my strength, the friend of my bosom, and the Saviour of my soul? Who else quickened me when dead, found me when lost, restored me when ruined, and established me when but weak in his ways? Who but he made me clean who was filthy, rich who was poor, clothed who was naked; a child of God who was a child of wrath, an heir of heaven who was an heir of hell, reconciled to God, and to sit with him "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"? Eph. ii. 6. Let to-day's solemnities memorialise love's sacrifice, both his and mine.

With gratitude I come. Multitudes have made profession. Many have proved false. With the few have I walked in his ways? Am I kept from apostasy? And is my soul true to his cause? I owe it only and wholly unto him. Garrisoned in Christ Jesus, we are kept by his mighty power. To his providence, his grace, his ordinances, his spirit, his intercession, and his word, his *people* owe their priceless privileges, the

pleasant prospects. Upheld by him, and delivered from all evil unto another year, to him be glory.

"See a bush that burns with fire,
Unconsum'd amidst the flame!
Turn aside the sight t' admire,
I the living wonder am.
Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am out of hell.

"See a stone that hangs in air!
See a spark in ocean live!
Kept alive with death so near!
I to God the glory give.
Ever tell,—to sinners tell,
I am, I am out of hell."

I would draw near with penitence. I ought to. I grieve over the retrospect of a life of sin. How many! How flagrant! How aggravated! What sins of omission and commission—sins of thought, word, deed—sins private, public, secret, open—sins in the church and in the world—sins *wilful, thoughtless,* against God and man—*sins every day* and every moment! O for

thorough, heartfelt penitence! With godly sorrow let me come to thee, my crucified, my grieved, yet my forgiving Saviour. Humbly thy most unworthy follower accepts thy welcome to the table. As for this day, I keep it "a feast unto the Lord." Num. xxviii. 12.

"Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope by thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home.

"Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from thy courts above."

Here I renew my faith in thee as the Christ of God. My trust is in the sacrifice of Jesus. For me he died. For us the Lamb was slain. My confidence is in his word of promise. I lay claim to the will and testament of the Lord of glory. Casting myself into the arms of his mercy; relying on his all-sufficient grace, I make as *David* did his dying words my own: "Tho'

lieve, help thou mine unbelief."

. Let me ever be found clingi
viour; attached to *his* people ;
divine his laws and instituti
lking in those steps in which h
ıd to-day, as the priest on the gr
nt day, I, who am a priest unto
Lamb, would offer the sacrifice

"My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thin
While like a penitent I stand
And there confess my sin.'

of the reign of Jesus in my heart and life, and for the ingathering of his elect in every land, rejoicing in hope, be mine. Be my body, soul, and spirit; my time, wealth, intellect, and talents; my example, influence, and active efforts devoted to the honour of the Master, the best interests of the saints, the furtherance of his cause, and the welfare of all mankind.

Let this ordinance be celebrated with holy joy. Why not? Who can have more just occasion? God is mine, my portion and my all. We are all to-day a year nearer our spiritual perfection, our heavenly home, our great reward. The church is rapidly approaching the consummation of her glory. Zion's King will soon be universally enthroned. In him and in such prospects his saints are already happy. Continually are such as are ripe for glory being wafted to that supernal bliss to which death admits them. His loving smile, his friendly greeting, provokes a song, stringing each heart,

nging the while—

)w happy all Thy servants are!
How great Thy grace to me!
y life, which Thou hast made Thy care
Lord, I devote to Thee.

)w I am Thine, for ever Thine,
Nor shall my purpose move;
hy hand hath loos'd my bonds of pain,
And bound me with Thy love.

[ere in Thy courts I leave my vow,
And Thy rich grace record:
Vitness, ye saints, who hear me now,
If I forsake the Lord."

FEBRUARY.

THE FEAST.

"Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?"—John xi. 56.

THERE is evident significance in the two rites of the Christian Church. Baptismal washing and sacramental feasting are not of merely arbitrary obligation. That these should be selected and appointed as permanent institutions is remarkable. Solomon says—"A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry." Eccl. x. 19. The Jews had many feasts, yet was not Judaism a religion of much joy. It "put a yoke upon its disciples in apostolic times which

reat joy, which shall be to al
e ii. 10. The enjoyment
ings is illustrated by the pr
apt comparison of a conti
id in this mountain shall th
s make unto all people a fe
gs, a feast of wine on the l
gs full of marrow, of wines
refined." Isai. xxv. 6.
efore, was Jesus' invitation ;
ing contrast to Moses' law ;
of his gracious purpose in ta
ie flesh—"Come unto me, a

When, for the last time, the Redeemer kept the Feast of the Passover, he instituted, for the future observance of all his followers, the feast which we now commemorate as his supper. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. xxvi. 26—29. Thus discipleship to Christ and fellowship with each other are both attested and exhibited in our frequent celebration of this festive rite; which, because founded by him, and to be observed for his sake, we appropriately call the Supper of our Lord.

It is a feast—a feast of penitents

... a feast of sympat
gratitude and joy. It is the
istian devotion. It is a feas
his to us, of ours to him; as
one another. It is a feast
of peace, and rest, while
;s—

"Here it is I find my heaven
While upon the Lamb I ga
Love I much, I've much fo
I'm a miracle of grace."

[ere as Christians we feel our
, our common Lord, that "he

free: but Christ is all, and in all." Col. iii. 11. We are one—

"One with the living bread divine,
Which now by faith we eat;
Our hearts, and minds, and spirits join,
And all in Jesus meet.

So dear the tie where souls agree
In Jesus' dying love;
Then only can it closer be
When all are joined above."

To meet with Jesus and his blood-bought people at his table is no ordinary gratification. A prelude it is, a preparative, a prelibation of heavenly joy; which also is represented in scripture as a feast, and as a supper, "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Rev. xix. 9. Here are pleasures to which mankind at large are strangers. Here is food of which even angels are not permitted to partake. But it is Jesus, whose presence we chiefly boast, which is here so pre-eminently displayed, and so *sweetly* realised. This renders the fellow-

ship of saints more pleasant than at any other gathering. Never does time fly so swiftly and so sweetly; never do we feel so loth to separate. Here all can testify—

> "In such society as this,
> My willing soul would rest;
> The man who dwells where Jesus is,
> Must be for ever blest."

Here we all feel at home. Through the mediation of the Son of God, our former estrangement is no longer felt. The distance is gone. Our reverence of God, and our love to him, is that of a child towards its parent. The familiarity, the freedom is that of friendship. Heavenly favours are bestowed. Earth's toils and dangers are for the time forgotten, and its darkness and distress dispelled. Fears and foes, cares and conflicts, business, politics, domestic trials, all are laid aside. We live a long season in a little time. We are all, and have all, and more than human vanity aspires to by *worldly methods.* We are rich. We are

honoured. We are kings. We are more than conquerors. We keep good company and associate with noble personages. We live in state. Our minds are at ease. Our wishes are met. Our wants are provided for. Our way is made plain. Our cause is successfully undertaken. For us is "a wedding garment." Matt. xxii. 11. For us is the "fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Rev. xix. 8. Our bliss is great, and soon will be complete.

"And we in high seraphic strains,
Shall all our powers employ;
Delighted range the ethereal plains,
And take our fill of joy."

It can therefore be no feast unless it be with Christ. He founded it and ordained its perpetual celebration. It eminently sets him forth. He is the life and soul of it. His cause is greatly advantaged by it. It subserves his everlasting glory. And, blessed be his holy name, to long for his

presence is certainly to procure it. Thus regarding it, and thus coming to it ourselves, it need not be feared "That he will not come to the feast." John xi. 56.

And how goodly the company who are there to welcome and behold him! "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." Luke xiii. 29. "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Rev. vii. 9. Happy celebrants! For at this supper here, we are meetened for the supper there. As the pilgrims in the Beulah country; or with the shepherds on the Delectable mountains; so here do we antedate the festal celebration of the heavenly paradise.

The murderous motive which prompted the enquiry of the Jews, instigated their *eager flocking to* this Passover. But in

ɜus at the blessed feast we meet together observe? Then, let the best of motives ge our eager haste. For, he here, there rely should not be the empty place of any rthy guest. Welcoming him, we are no s welcome. His merit makes his presence lcome to his saints; and his rich, free, -abounding grace renders the presence of people no less welcome unto him. I, ɜrefore, will go. I who have a diadem Jesus' brow. For there he sits enroned, "and on his head were many owns." Rev. xix. 12.

"I that am all defiled with sin,
A rebel to my God;
I that have crucified His Son,
And trampled on His blood.

"What strange, surprising grace is this,
That such a soul has room;
My Saviour takes me by the hand,
My Jesus bids me come."

MARCH.

THE BANNER.

"He brought me to the banqueting-hou
ner over me was love."—Song of Solomon

'REOUNDING the festal board, ho
lly are we reminded of the lov
wards us as exhibited in our re
d salvation. It not only fu

my love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' den, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" Cant. iv. 7—10.

What a thought on which to dwell, that I am beloved of God! Pride and prejudice may make me to be despised and persecuted of my fellow-men, scorned and hated of the world, but as for God, he loves me, delights in me, honours me, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. As the Psalmist did, from trouble I turn to him, and say—"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and *my deliverer*; make no tarrying, O my God."

Ps. xl. 17. In the bustle of life, in the duties of the day, in the seclusion of home, in the still and wakeful hours of night; whether old or young, or rich or poor, or strong or feeble, or remembered or forgotten, —this thought, so precious, still is with me—I am beloved of God! Treading firm, I walk erect, breathe freely, look right on, speak boldly, act with dignity, whoever, whatever, or wherever I may be; for it is God who loves me. He is mine, and I am his. He is with me, and I am with him. We are near and dear, openly acknowledged friends. I am content to be what he appoints, to do what he commands, to suffer what he ordains, and to enjoy what he allows. He loving me, all is well. Resigned to his all-wise will, I can live or die, be sorely tried, and experience many changes, convinced the through all he loves me. There is confider for God is faithful. He is just and No heart ever bled, or was broken, be *God has proved faithless* to its tr

to his own promises, or had disappointed th expectations which his conduct justified. God is the Rock of Ages.

"And as soon may he cease to be God,
As Jehovah may change in His love."

How superior is his love to me! It gilds, it gladdens, it glorifies every word and deed. More judicious than the best of fathers'; more tender than the fondest mothers'; more ardent than the love of the holiest spouse; it is more full, more complete, more sure, than of all in one. It is a love pervaded by every attribute of God. Is he good? His love is good. Is he wise? His is an all-wise love. Is he almighty, just, omniscient, omnipresent, patient? His love to me is all these. Is God eternal? From everlasting everlasting is his love. Is God independent all beings, periods, circumstances, events, d things? Even so is his love to me. Is ever-blessed, infinite, all-sufficient, and hangeable; the same great, glorious, reign Lord? Of the same nature is his

born of God, and knoweth God
loveth not, knoweth not God,
love." 1 John iv. 7-8. Nevert
the affection of each of the div
n the Godhead. God the fathe
God the Son loves me. God
Spirit loves me. God loves
reconciled Father; as my prince
is my sanctifier, comforter, ar
benefactor. God loves me as Deity
n eternal, awful, glorious ma
oves me as Immanuel, inhabit
human nature: who is the hum

Spirit. It is a royal and a spousal love; a princely and brotherly regard. Our love to each other should be its reflection. Then may we say of it—

"Love all defects doth hide,
Makes great obstructions small;
'Tis prayer, 'tis praise, 'tis sacrifice,
'Tis God, 'tis heaven, 'tis all."

Happy mortal! In no way can I rightly think of God, but my joyful conclusion is, God loves me. He always has, and always will. His is love which never knew beginning, and will never have an end.

"His love no end or measure knows,
Unspeakable its source;
Unchangeably the same it flows,
In one eternal course."

Nor is this any strange conceit, a fanatical opinion, the result of hypothetical conjecture. Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, my sinful nature has been changed; so that now, in obeying *his will*, I do know of "the doctrin

diately from God. His spirit w
bears indubitable witness. Thi
nance confirms the grace. F
Lord Jesus says—" O my dove
the clefts of the rock, in the sec
the stairs; let me see thy coun
me hear thy voice; for sweet is
and thy countenance is comely."
14. I accept this rite, and
this supper as a remembrance
rial of his love. For with his b
his flowing blood, here set before
heaven attests the [illegible]

l to the love of all his people, press upon
! Here let me learn to love; and loving,
e yet more. Be love my law, my life;
all on earth; my heaven. "Herein is
e, not that we loved God, but that he
ed us, and sent his Son to be the pro-
ation for our sins. Beloved, if God so
ed us, we ought also to love one another.
man hath seen God at any time. If we
e one another, God dwelleth in us, and
love is perfected in us." 1 John iv. 10-12.
n love, like the sword of Goliath,
here is none like that." 1 Sam. xxi. 9.
, unlike that weapon, where love is, there
habitual conquest. Applicable to this
rtory of heavenly love are the words of
nsel addressed by Jesus to the twelve
stles—"Therefore if thou bring thy
to the altar, and there rememberest
t thy brother hath ought against thee;
re there thy gift before the altar and go
way; first be reconciled to thy brother,
then come and offer thy gift." Matt. v.

23-24. The example he himself has se us; who is not only our friend, but says– "I have called you friends." Jno. xv. 1 Friendship is the outcome of sincere an true affection. Christian friendship i evolved of Jesus' lovingkindness and c saintly love. The sweet music of the sou it cheers our saddest hours, and gives ap propriate expression to our joy. A flower from the heavenly paradise, it blooms i earthly soil. A gem of the High Priest breast-plate, it glistens on their bosom wh are kings and priests to God. I come t this feast to declare my love to him and t all his saints.

"Lov'd of my God, for Him again,
With love intense I'd burn;
Chosen of Thee ere time began,
I'd choose Thee in return.

"Whate'er consists not with Thy love,
O teach me to resign:
I'm rich to all the intents of bliss,
If Thou, O God, art mine."

APRIL.

THE CUP.

.or, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; :less not my will, but thine, be done."—Luke

olemn hour of festal fellowship recalls 's hour of woe. This cup of blessing .to his cup of wrath. Destined in all to have the pre-eminence, the Lord was pre-eminent in what he suffered. ıbstitute sustaining the penal conse- :s of human guilt, the punishment of udes was comprehended in his doom. ry phase of our experience set forth pattern to his saints, and an example ıkind, his trial, to be unexceptionable

accordingly. The merit of
suffering of the man, illust
petency to be made "A curs
iii. 13. His agony in the ga
semane approves it—an agon
unexampled, unconceived. A
which we do well to study a
agony which, when all is tol
plicable—an agony of profo
but of transcendent mercy.
come; that dreaded, dreadf
there awaited him. Courage
it: his humanity shrinking fr

oppressing the holy Lamb of God. Yet his prayer is—"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Nor was his prayer otherwise than his intention. For when Peter would have defended him from arrest, by the use of force, it is related—"Then said Jesus unto Peter, put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John xviii. 11. So resigned was Jesus to the holy, awful will of God.

These words of pious resignation, in the lips of Jesus, how admirable! That cup was composed of many a bitter. It was a cup of plagues, of poison, of perdition. There, in that cup were the most terrible and exhaustive apprehensions of what it behoved him to suffer. There was the withdrawment of the comforting influences which flowed from the union in his person of the divine and human natures; as also *of every* other spiritual and heavenly

were brought to bear against u
than their usual force. But
the penal character of his hu
that which most afflicted him
sin in us, God cursed his well
Never had Jesus so seen hell;
so far from heaven. No bein
so felt the flames of Tophet.
ever so blasted by the wrath
this cup for him to drink! T
the Lord of glory, the creato
of the universe, the holy Je
drink it at his Father's hand

it alone. The disciples had followed him across the brook, and into the oft-frequented garden. Peter, James, and John approached still nearer to the scene of the Saviour's anguish. But "he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast." Luke xxii. 41. There must be no partner in his woe. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Isai. lxiii. 3. But in answer to his prayer, "There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." Luke xxii. 43. Thus cheered, his dismay vanishes. Fear flies, love triumphs.

"Made strong in strength, renew'd from heaven,
Jesus receiv'd the cup as given;
And perfectly resign'd;
He drinks the wormwood mix'd with gall,
Sustains the curse, removes it all,
Nor leaves a dreg behind."

These words of pious resignation, in the lips of Christians how suitable! Every *Christian has* a cup to drink—a cup of

sorrow, of affliction, a cup of gall and wormwood. But the cup is curseless. It may be a full cup, and a bitter one; but it is as full of blessing. It is lovingly, not wrathfully, put into the Christian's hand. Wisdom and righteousness, not vengeance, appointed it. It comes from our heavenly Father, not from the hand of the executioner—from a God reconciled to us in love, and present to comfort and sustain our fainting heart. We also well deserve our cup of woe; and not only our own, but the cup of our atoning Lord; and with no good and sanctified results attending it. An impatient spirit may well be checked by the words of the dying robber—"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Luke xxiii. 40-41. Therefore let us, in *drinking the cup* which is placed in our *hands, imitate Jesus*, in the faith, meekness

patience, and submission
cannot suffer what he di
subjects of the same all·
was afforded him. Thu:
suffer cheerfully, and sin

"How bitter that cup, no he
Which he drank quite up
live;
His way was much rough
mine,
Did Christ my Lord suffer,

"Since all that I meet must
The bitter is sweet, the mo
Though painful at presen
long,
And then O how pleasant t

The humiliation of th
not a mere trial to which
subjected; and by which
to be made apparent.
punishment, the severest
by the highest personage–
of intelligent and interes
be known in all worlds

evermore. It was not merely the Holy One suffering for the sinful many; the innocent for the guilty: but as being himself a criminal, the guiltiest of the guilty, although undeserving of the imputation. Never had altars such a burden as his humanity there bore. Never had sacrificial victims such sufferings to endure; nor such merit to enhance their value. Of the woes of the damned, of the torments of hell, we know nothing but what is recorded in Holy Writ. But in accomplishing our redemption, Jesus endured the wrath of God. He bore the curse of sin. He suffered hell. Mountain woes accumulated upon the Saviour's sorrowing heart. Heaven's red-hot thunder-bolts of vengeance transfixed Messiah's soul. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke xxii. 44.

As if to refresh his spirit before drinking *a cup so dreadful*, bearing a cross so heavy



l dying a death of such pain and shame,
us blessed the cup of festal joy and
ial fellowship, which, in accordance with
will, has become an institution of his
ırch and kingdom. "Who in the days
iis flesh, when he had offered up prayers
l supplications with strong crying and
rs unto him that was able to save him
n death, and was heard in that he
red; though he were a Son, yet learned
obedience by the things which he
'ered: and being made perfect, he became
author of eternal salvation unto all
m that obey him." Heb. v. 7, 8, 9. For
sake, therefore, let us take the cup.
vill refresh us for taking up our cross;
the cross will fit us for the crown and
one.

"This holy bread and wine
Maintains our fainting breath;
By union with our living Lord,
And interest in His death."

MAY.

THE SCRUTINY.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."—1 Cor. xi. 28-29

ONE of the advantages of the atonement is, that our corruptions may be mortified where Christ was slain; and our graces quickened where he died. A visit to Calvary, and a contemplation of its solemn scenes, cannot but conduce to our being crucified to the world, and the world unto us; as also to our being glorified with a *crucified Immanuel*, and his being already "*Glorified in his* saints, and admired in all



them that believe." 2 Thess. i. 10. In looking upon him as he hung upon the tree, a covetous Christian, a selfish disciple must let go his grasp of the world—"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. The envious, malignant, wrathful professor must feel a better influence affect him, as he beholds incarnate love dying ignominiously on the cross; through the bitter, unprovoked, and wicked hatred of his fellow-countrymen, the Jews; and for the sins, not of himself, but of sinful men. He whom slander is making fretful and unhappy will chide a murmuring disposition, as he hears his holy Lord exclaim—"Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to

drink." Ps. lxix. 20-21. For his Lord it was, whose whole life never furnished an occasion of reproach; whose bosom never felt a pang, the consequence of personal guilt. The politician, as also the pleasure-seeking member of God's household, will learn the vanity of earthly things, sufficiently to enforce the apostolic injunction—"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. iii. 2. Nor is there a sinful propensity but must get "a killing-stroke," if taken to the cross of Christ. If not, it follows, either that it was not certainly taken there; or that the professed disciple of the Saviour is, unhappily, soul-deceived. Sin in the children of God cannot face Christ's cross, nor encounter its deadly thrusts. Nor can God allow his saints to embosom the serpent that stings even unto death his only begotten Son; and deceived, to their ruin, the family of man. *God is the* God of sinners sanctified and *saved; but the* devil is the only god of sinners

in the fall. Beelzebub, not Christ, is their king who live in sin. The world in this life, not the church; and hell in that which is to come, not heaven, are properly the sinner's place. Jesus saves his people *from* their sins, not *in* them. He died to sanctify and seal us as his own; not to provide the means of cloaking crime, or of screening the transgressor. Out upon it, therefore! Away with it to Jesus' cross! We are the servants of Christ, and refuse to be the slaves of sin. An offender, impenitent and unforgiven, cannot feel at home at the cross, nor at this table; nor would he feel at home in heaven. No, we are crucified with a sinless, but sin-bearing, sin-atoning Saviour. He offered himself to God, a whole burnt-sacrifice for us. We offer ourselves to him in love, a whole burnt-sacrifice. We will no more bruise his body. We will no more break his heart. Rather than crucify the Lord afresh, we will be *crucified* with him. If death be the

alternative, we will die the death. So shal we live again, and live together with him "Knowing this, that our old man is crucifie with him, that the body of sin might b destroyed, that henceforth we should nc serve sin. For he that is dead is free from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him knowing that Christ being raised from th dead dieth no more; death hath no mor dominion over him." Rom. vi. 6-9.

"We will be slaves no more,
Since Christ has made us free,
Has nail'd our tyrants to his cross,
And bought our liberty."

On the contrary, be it ours to grow i grace, by bringing our graces to the cross c our gracious God. When doubting, an almost in despair, let our eager resort be t the cross. Our faith must gather life an vigour, where even the heathen centurio *was constrained* to acknowledge our Re *deemer to* be not only a righteous man, b

also the Son of God. When languid, lukewarm, and loath to do what is well pleasing in his sight let us away to the Saviour's cross. There a dying malefactor pressed into the kingdom. There filial love on the part of John, and maternal love on the part of Mary, waxed fervent at the Master's bidding. There sympathy and zeal, in Nicodemus, and in Joseph, grew bold and manly. There the courage and devotedness of the weeping women at the feet of the Crucified One were wonderfully strengthened. There, too, our spiritual manhood shall be quickened. There shall we be anointed with fresh oil.

O Jesus, crucified! Thou lovely sufferer! Thou holy lamb of God! Spectacle more than human! Conform me to the image of my God! Let me draw near; and there gather into my love new elements of purity and ardent action, from the exhibition of thine own. Expiring Saviour! God with *us! The* incarnate Word! Love, life,

divine! My powers, so powerless to go so strong to evil, I lament and mou Breathe, O breathe on these slain, that t may live. Breathe on these dry bones mine. Bathed in tears of penitence love, of gratitude and sacred joy, I would die, clasping thy death-cold f Thanks, therefore, O Jesus, for thy dea Thanks for this thy feast!

"Victorious God! what can we pay
For favours so divine?
We would devote our hearts away,
To be for ever thine.

"We give Thee, Lord, our highest praise,
The tributes of our tongues;
But themes so infinite as these
Exceed our noblest songs."

JUNE.

THE STRIPES.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him."—John. xix. 1.

Our thoughts are caught away by these words to the final sufferings of our Surety, Substitute, and Saviour. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. ii, 24. Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha suggest to us scenes of woe of extraordinary and painful interest. It may be said of the Lord Jesus as of Joseph his patriarchal prototype—"The archers have sorely grieved him, and *shot at him,* and hated him: but his bow

the rabble he would not have
death, we nevertheless are
grieved at what he condescende
their hands. Intimidated by t
judge put him to the torture
shoulders to the rods of the R
Previously Pilate had permitte
to strike him with their open l
sequently even the common
allowed, not only to smite him
on him, and buffet him. S
the scourging, that he fainted

hapless innocent, the prey of rapine, cruelty, and lust, were ever so abused. A slave could not have been more ruffianly and vilely handled. For both the crucifixion and the scourging were punishments inflicted by the Romans on the slaves and refuse of the people; on the most despicable and detested of their enemies. As such the Lord Jesus was now treated; the infatuated Jews preferring the release of the odious Barabbas to the escape of Christ their king. They knew no pity. They showed him no mercy. Pilate himself, moved by our Redeemer's sufferings, failed to excite the least compassion towards him; when conscious of his innocence and their envy, he forebore not to exclaim—"Behold the man!" John. xix, 5.

After all, how superior the condemned and insulted Jesus to Pontius Pilate, his judge! How preferable the physical sufferings of the Saviour to the mental *wretchedness* of those who compassed his

destruction! How hideously the inhumanity of his enemies contrasts with the admirable behaviour of the sufferer! the pusillanimity of the judge with the calmness and patience of their victim! Beholding the drooping form of our Lord and Master on that gory, blood-stained pavement; his body bruised, but his spirit firm, unbroken; who can repress astonishment? Hence the scripture —"As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man; and his form more than the sons of men." Isai. lii. 14. So were fulfilled those other Messianic prophecies—"The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows." Ps. cxxix. 3. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Isai. l. 6. And so were fulfilled his own predictions, addressed to his disciples—"Behold, we go up *to Jerusalem;* and the Son of man shall be *betrayed unto* the chief priests and unto



the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." Matt. xx. 18-19.

But it was not all earth, nor hell; the Divine was there. It was not all man, nor devil, but the Lord. "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Isai. liii. 9-10. The apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, when addressing these red-handed Jews, majestically vindicated the honour of his Master in this particular—"Ye men of Israel (said he) hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Acts ii. 22—24. Hence the impotence of his cruel foes. Their nearest approach to triumph and success, what was it but their defeat and overthrow? How vain their best concerted schemes! How foolish their wisest plans! So on earth's battle-plains the gaunt Philistine dared defy the Lord's anointed; and madly challenged to single combat him whom he idly cursed by his idol-gods. So vainly strives the gathering thunder-cloud to annihilate the brilliance of the orb of day; and to robe universal nature with a funereal pall. So rashly fought the rebel-angels against their King in heaven; as though the finite could defeat the infinite, and in arms the creature vie with the Creator.

Although affecting to a penitent sinner *it is consolatory* to the believer to contemplate *also the voluntary* submission of Im

to such cruel chastisements. "Therefore (said he) doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John x. 17-18. So too the vicarious and substitutionary character of what he underwent. For himself such sufferings were in all respects unnecessary. It was on our account he bled, and groaned, and died. "As the Father knoweth me (said Jesus) even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." John x. 15. Thus the prophet—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are *healed. All* we like sheep have gone astray

we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isai. liii. 4-6.

"For us His flesh with nails was torn,
He bore the scourge, He felt the thorn;
And justice pour'd upon His head,
Its heavy vengeance in our stead."

What succour and sympathy redound to his persecuted and afflicted followers, from such a great high priest in heaven. Especially to those who like the apostles have literally been—"beaten and commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus." Like them such have reason to depart from the presence of their enemies—"rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Acts v. 40-41. Thus Paul and Silas, having had their clothes rent off their bodies, and many stripes laid upon them; and then, thrust into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the *stocks, may well* keep all the prisoners awake *at midnight* with their joyful songs. Acts

xvi. 22-25. And the afflicted no less than the persecuted. For as amenable to the rod of our heavenly Father; how much lighter is the rod of his love than the rod of his wrath!

"God will not always chide,
And when His strokes are felt,
His strokes are fewer than our crimes,
And lighter than our guilt."

Not for our punishment, but for our profit, are we chastened of the Lord; not in judgment, but in mercy; not preparatory to our execution, but in order to our sanctification and salvation. We are not driven from God's floor, as chaff by the blow of the flail; but have the remainders of corruption and evil in our nature purged away, that we may be meet for his everlasting and ineffable presence and glory.

How different is the experience of the suffering saint and his Saviour! When our Lord was scourged he had not the friendly *presence* of his disciples to cheer him.

But in our trials God's presence attends us. Of his all-sufficient grace we are not only upheld, but derive from it joy and peace. Nor had the only begotten of the Father any comforting token of his Father's love. His bodily pains and mental agony were unalleviated by a single smile from God. Not a ray of heavenly light broke in upon the gloom of his oppressed and troubled soul. Not even an angel now appears unto him and strengthens him. But our sorest chastisements are themselves proofs of our Father's love, and are accompanied by every suitable pledge of his lovingkindness and grace. Never can it be said of us as of him—

"Barbarous people! cruel priests!
How they stood round like savage beasts;
Like lions gaping to devour,
When God had left Him in their power."

As beaten gold, so a stricken Saviour is none the less esteemed by those who have *proved his worth.* "Unto you therefore *which believe he is* precious." 1 Pet. ii. 7.

We are ashamed of those who smote him, and of our heinous guilt, the occasion of his stripes. But of him we cannot be ashamed. And of his great love to us he is not ashamed of the treatment to which he was subjected. "And one shall say unto him, what are those wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Zech. xiii. 6. As pertaining to the oblation he continually offers in Heaven; as our Great High Priest; to those wounds he points, as to incidental proofs of the work which he accomplished for his saints on earth. Although he rose from the grave and ascended up on high, with a body no more mortal, but incorruptible and spiritual, it was nevertheless—

> "With scars of honour in His flesh,
> And triumph in His eyes."

As his people, we cannot be forgetful of those scars. We shall see them in glory, even as the apostle John did in vision.

"In the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb, as it had been slain." Rev. v. 6. As it does not detract from his honour, it will not lessen our joy. Indeed, it will heighten it. The marriage supper will be—"The marriage supper of the lamb." Rev. xix. Be it ours to contemplate the mystery of those tragic scenes. And to draw nearer to Jesus, that we may better ascertain their nature, and prove their efficacy, let us come to his well-spread board. Let not a sense of sin and shame—let not a feeling of unworthiness, timidity, and self-distrust—let not excess of caution—let not over-scrupulousness cause us to shrink from his approach, or to hesitate to accept his welcome. "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," Luke xv. 2, has ever been his character for condescension.

As Laban to Abraham's servant, so the *Lord Jesus* addresses unto us the words of *welcome*—"Come in, thou blessed of the

ord; wherefore standest thou without?" en. xxiv. 31. Be our response—"Awake, north wind; and come, thou south; blow pon my garden, that the spices thereof ay flow out. Let my beloved come into is garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." ant. iv. 16. Then shall he reply—"I am ome into my garden, my sister, my spouse: have gathered my myrrh with my spice; have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O eloved." Cant. v. 1.

"Happy souls approach the table,
Taste the soul reviving food;
Nothing half so sweet and pleasant
As the Saviour's flesh and blood!
'It is finished!'
Christ has borne the heavy load.

"Tune your harps anew, ye seraphs,
Join to sing the pleasing theme;
All on earth, and all in heaven,
Join to praise Immanuel's name;
Hallelujah!
Glory to the bleeding Lamb!"

THE COMMUNION.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the c
union of the blood of Christ? The bread which
eak, is it not the communion of the body of Ch
or we being many are one bread, and one body: fo
e all partakers of that one bread."—1 Cor. x. 16-17

THROUGH the medium of this mystic
n the use of these symbols, as Chris
with our Lord and

sweet word communion. It is more than union, co-operation, and reciprocal benevolence; it being a mutual self-lending. Although embodying the purest, richest, noblest sentiment, it is not merely sentimental. The transcendental and the speculative are alike foreign to communion; the experimental and the natural being its proper elements. As far also is it from grossness; the sensual and material, the merely animal. It is the fellowship of spirits whether disembodied or incarnate; their fellowship in all that contributes to real enjoyment and enduring worth. It is the socialism of souls—the brotherhood of minds—the wedlock of confiding, wooing hearts, aspiring to perfection. Heaven and immortality mature its loveliness and beauty, and complete its bliss.

Friendship is the proper medium of communion, and becomes its bond and evidence. Both are founded in esteem; and *subsist* so long as that esteem continues.

tears of pungent sorrow than lit up warm sunshine of undissembled joy in communion all are happy. The worldly seek it in each other; the and devout in God and in his saints. world will love its own." John xv. 1 as the apostle John, so every true can testify. "That which we ha and heard declare we unto you, that may have fellowship with us: and t fellowship is with the Father, and son Jesus Christ." 1 John i, 3.

Apart from spiritual religion

or Beulah climate, imparts not its invigorating, healthful properties. It is of the earth earthy. It needs the Saviour.

The communion of saints would be more blissful were but saints more saintly. Either, as in some cases, there is disobedience to the law of Christ with respect to its terms; or, as in others, there is an abnegation of its spirit in a deficiency of brotherly love. Social conventionalities in secular life restrain the better feelings of brethren in church-communion, by whom class distinctions should be ignored. But among them there is real communion, notwithstanding some defects. Not an element is wanting, although not one may reach (in this world) its destined and necessary perfection. Liberty, fraternity, equality, are only known to saints. "The whole family in heaven and earth," Eph. iii. 15. is God's own description of his people. Love is law in Christ's house. "That they all may be *one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee



that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 21—23. This was the great concern and earnest prayer of our divine Redeemer. Christianity in action is communion. "To rejoice with them tha do rejoice, and weep with them that weep, Rom. xii. 15, is an obligation of con munion. Or as in another passage—"Th there should be no schism in the bod but that the members should have t same care one for another. And whet one member suffer, all the members su with it; or one member be honoured, the members rejoice with it. Now ye *the body* of Christ, and members in *ticular.*" 1 Cor. xii. 25—27.

Communion with God is a sacred and inestimable privilege. It is marvellously extensive. His spirit, in common with himself, is ours. So is his moral nature. So are his names. Our Father's house is his children's home. His kingdom is the inheritance of every saint. There is communion with him in love, in peace, in joy, in honour; in the resources of his wisdom, power, and grace; in devotion to each other's interests; and in a knowledge of each other's heart and mind. There is communion with God in the manifestation of his presence; by means of his word and ordinances; in private devotion; in public consecration to his service; and also in our meek and patient resignation to his afflicting hand. Faith and prayer, with love and holy zeal, bring us near to God; and in our exercise of each Christian grace God draws near to us. Gentleness, contentment, gratitude, a meek and quiet spirit, are peculiarly *favourable* to communion with the Lord

Spiritual-mindedness is above all things to be cherished in order to a rich enjoyment of this blessing. In brotherly love we have a pledge, an evidence, the medium of our fellowship with God in love. Consequently —"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 1 John iii. 14. That God is for me; is in me, is with me, will never leave me or forsake me, is the expression of conscious security and stability in the new and better covenant which communion with God imparts. This festal rite affords a special opportunity both of communion with God and with each other. It is an hour of seclusion. It is a sacred, solemn season. Let us ever improve it to the utmost.

"Forgotten be each worldly theme,
When Christians meet together thus,
We only wish to speak of Him,
Who lived, and died, and reigns for us.



"We'll talk of all He did, and said,
And suffer'd for us here below;
The path He mark'd for us to tread,
And what He's doing for us now.

"Thus as the moments pass away,
We'll love, and wonder, and adore;
And hasten on the glorious day,
When we shall meet to part no more."

AUGUST.

THE FRUIT.

ıe fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and ess and truth."—Eph. v. 9.

s given unto us of his Spirit. "We e mind of Christ." 1 Cor. ii. 16. Lord Jesus Christ reigns over us in so the Holy Spirit controls and



to form our intentions, and direct our course of conduct, so do we act contrary to the Spirit of God. Then it is we grieve it, do despite unto it, and quench it. Our own spirits are perverse; being contrary and opposite to the will of God. This is oftentimes painfully apparent. There is hatred where there should be love, sorrow where there should be joy, anger where there should be peace, impatience where there should be long-suffering, rudeness where there should be gentleness, evil where there should be goodness, suspicion where there should be faith, haughtiness where there should be meekness, and insobriety where there should be temperance. Whereas the apostle declares—"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the

Spirit. Let us not be desirous of v
glory, provoking one another, envying
another." Gal. v. 22-26. And as abov
"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all g
ness and righteousness and truth." Eph.
But if for contentment there be envy,
charity censoriousness, and for forgive
resentment and revenge; I repeat it,
resist the Holy Ghost, being impelled
our own spirit. In thus making the S
of God give place to our own, we displ
God, and bring guilt upon our souls.
also bring a reproach upon religion,
substituting nature for grace, the old
for the new, the law of sin and death
the law of the spirit of life in Christ Je
Spiritual religion demands self-renuncia
and obedience to the will of God. "
the grace of God that bringeth salva
hath appeared to all men, teaching us t
denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
should live soberly, righteously, and g
in this present world; looking for that b

hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might reedeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 11-14. This is good and pleasant fruit; good in its nature, pleasant in its enjoyment and influence. This fruit contributes to the provision made for Christ's festal board. The master himself delights to be present where it abounds; where there is—

"The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
The mystic joys of penitence:
The godly grief, the pleasing smart,
The meltings of a broken heart:
The tears that tell your sins forgiven,
The sighs that waft your souls to heaven:
The guiltless shame, the sweet distress,
The unutterable tenderness;
The genuine, meek humility,
The wonder, 'Why such love to me!'
The o'erwhelming power of saving grace,
The sight that veils the seraph's face,
The speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

ce should ever put us
red, solemn obligations.
commemorative of the
, and of the blessings
lement, it says to us—
ot that your body is the
Ghost which is in you,
od, and ye are not your
bought with a price:
l in your body, and in
re God's." 1 Cor. vi.
n more in danger from
an from the evil one.





against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Gal. v. 16-18. Although our temptations are many, and our tempters wary, the admonitory counsel of the Master is—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. xxvi. 41. Our foes may be powerful and terrible, but "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." 1 John. iv. 4. Solemn, most solemn, are the warning words of the apostle Paul—"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received"

spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. viii. 12—15.

The spirit of the man Christ Jesus, always influenced as it was by the Holy Ghost, is itself a study. There there was no depravity, no corruption. On the eve of his deepest sorrows, fiercest temptations, and most awful sufferings, with holy confidence he comforted his disciples with these assuring words—"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." John xiv. 30-31. Purity and honesty, high-toned principle and beautiful simplicity, ever characterized our great exemplar. In him there was nothing base-born, mean, and grovelling. Neither pandering to their vile affections, nor consulting their captious and capricious *humour, Jesus* feared not the frowns nor *courted the* smiles of men. With a good

conscience he declared openly—"And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." John. viii. 29. A being of elevated sentiment, of noble mind, of modest worth, was Jesus—"Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Heb. vii. 26. Here, at his table, his glorious character is all unveiled. Here there is no reserve, concealment, nor restraint. So near to Gethsemane and Calvary, from these Christ reveals himself. Here were made the most wonderful disclosures.

> "The tall archangel never saw
> So much of God before."

The combined and unmixed excellencies of all the best of men in the Lord Jesus are outvied. Short of his, disappointed, we may testify with David—"I have seen an end of all perfection." Psa. cxix. 96. But *here is* "the pearl of great price," "the

God in flesh made manifest,
Shines in my Redeemer's fa
Full of beauty, truth, and

"Here I would for ever stay,
Weep, and gaze my soul aw
Thou art heaven on earth t
Lonely, mournful, Calvary.



SEPTEMBER.

THE CROSS.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—Gal. vi. 14.

To glory in anything is to make it our boast and joy. We are naturally given to this glorying. But as Christians, differing from mankind at large, we glory only in a crucified Redeemer. Not in his cross of wood. Not in this sacramental rite. Not in his virgin mother. Not in the saints exalted at his right hand. Not in a human priesthood, although of divine ordination. Nor in the church. But in "Jesus Christ, *and him* crucified." 1 Cor. ii. 2. Christ is

the proper object of a Christian's glorying. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. ix. 23-24.

We glory in the dignity of his person. We do not regard a suffering Saviour as a criminal, abhorred of God, and crucified of man; receiving from indignant justice the due demerit of his misdeeds. Nor as a merely innocent person suffering an unjust sentence. Nor as some benevolent individual dying in the cause and stead of others. We glory in Christ crucified as a being who united in his person the divine and human *natures; as the* model man; whose humanity *was not only* untainted by the depravity of

our race; but free from sin and perfect in righteousness. On that cross hung God's "Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. i. 2-3. Not as Pilate, but proudly, we exclaim "Behold the man!" John xix. 5. And devoutly with the centurion "Truly this was the Son of God." Matt. xxvii. 54. But we also believe the scripture record—"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21.

We glory in the benevolence of his mind. His was a most enlarged philanthropy. He loved us even unto death, the shameful death of the cross. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but

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iliation unto death. That "Christ als
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ıst, that he might bring us to Go
ıg put to death in the flesh, bı
ckened by the Spirit," 1 Pet. iii. 18,
to his reproach, but his honour.

"He never looked so good, so great,
As when he bowed his head and died."

We glory in the grandeur of his a
... the sacrifice of hims

fit us for immortal glory. Not only to restore to us a holy immortality, but to regain our long-lost Paradise, and to open to his followers the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem. In one comprehensive sentence, Christ came to accomplish his Father's purpose—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him." Eph. i. 10.

We glory in the facts of his death. His timid judge acknowledging his innocence, condemned him to die, as that only would appease the clamour of his enraged persecutors. At his mock-trial "He witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate." 1 Tim. vi. 12. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23. Without a murmur he bore the cruel mocking and scourging of his enemies. Meek

he bore his cross up Calvary's rugged hill, until faint and weary he sunk beneath the load. Suspended to the cross, affectionately he commends his mother to the beloved disciple's care; and his spirit to his Father and his God. He dies, not uttering the language of impatience or revenge, but breathing promises of mercy to a penitent malefactor, who for robbery and murder was crucified at his side; and also praying for his own murderers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii. 34. How wonderful the darkness, and how marvellous the occurrences, which marked the extraordinary death of the illustrious Saviour. Matthew relates—"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour," (and Luke adds) "and the sun was darkened,"—"and, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to *the bottom;* and the earth did quake, and *the rocks rent;* and the graves were opened,

and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Matt. xxvii. 51-3. Nor did Jesus die in despair of his mission; but in the confident assurance of success. For says John, xix. 30, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Never had there been such a scene, and never will there be again. We glory in such a death.

"We see the blood of Jesus shed
Whence all our pardons rise;
The sinner views th' atonement made,
And loves the sacrifice.

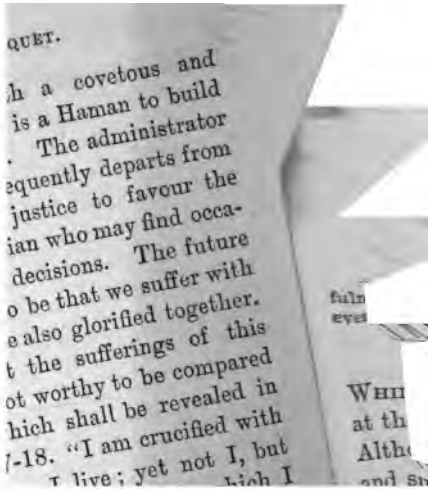
"Thy cruel thorns, thy shameful cross,
Procure us heavenly crowns;
Our highest gain springs from Thy loss,
Our healing from Thy wounds."

We also regard this our glorying as perly justifiable, especially when we recall words—"By whom the world is crucified me, and I unto the world."

By a crucified Redeemer the world is crucified unto me. His death points me to a better world, and excites within me a preference for it. It must be a better world which received his immortal spirit when this world would no longer abide his presence. Having treated our Lord so ill, how can we love it? It crucified my Redeemer; let it be crucified to me. It can have no charm for me. Let my thoughts and affections soar where Jesus is. Especially as his death places that better world within my reach, and prepares me for it. The veil of the temple at Jerusalem, which concealed the interior of the holy of holies, was rent in two, at the death of Jesus, from the top to the bottom; to signify the accessibility of heaven, the holiest of all, to every true worshipper. As a Christian, this present evil world being crucified to me, it is as though it had ceased to exist as the object of my delight and trust; as though *it had deservedly* perished; even by the *accursed death* of the cross.



By a crucified Redeemer I am crucified unto the world. It hates and persecutes the Christian. It is unchanged and unchangeable in its character and principles. It is as much as ever opposed to the cause and claims of Christ. It would again crucify him, if it had the power; and does crucify him often in his members. Eminent piety meets with the determined opposition of the world. It even disinherits and disowns the Christian. Christians are not usually preferred to places of power and trust. The emoluments of the world are bestowed upon the worldly. When Christians are elevated to distinguished political positions, it is not because of their Christianity, but in spite of it. Christians also are not often remarkable for the wisdom of this world, any more than for its riches and honours. Lands and territorial possessions are the lot of the men of this world. If Christians are ever found holding property, *filling* high offices, or otherwise famou


QUET.

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OCTOBER.

THE BLISS.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Psalm xvi. 11.

WHILE all men are seeking to be happy, we at the table of our Lord are truly blest. Although multitudes are strangers to solid and substantial joy, Christians know something of the gladness of the skies. For none will parade as happiness the boisterous mirth of the ungodly; or call that peace which the pleasure-goer vainly boasts. It is true we are not all here equally triumphant. It is true that none of us are always so far removed from care as now. Nor are any of *us ever as happy* as we might be. It may

Lord, sought it not of men ; nor
nor this side the tomb. Nor
Sin has thrust happiness beyc
assisted reach. It is not a flow

"What is the world with all its
'Tis but a bitter sweet:
When I attempt to pluck a rose
A prickly thorn I meet.

" Here perfect bliss can ne'er be
The honey's mixed with gall;
Midst changing scenes and dyir
Be Thou my All in All."

none can find the way. Divine instruction must be given, or our erring feet will miss the track. Eminent grace must be attained in order to exalted glory. God only can divulge the hidden secret or open up the unknown path. His favour only can put us in possession of the clue, and most distinguished is this token of the divine regard. Death also must be passed through and triumphed over; or an insuperable obstacle remains. But Jesus died. He passed through death, and triumphed over Hell. As our forerunner he died to open up the way; to light up the entire route, to remove the stumbling-blocks; to take possession of the joy which crowns the journey's end; and to encourage Zion's pilgrims to emulate his excellent example. As the Lord Jesus died to sin, to worldly pleasures, to earthly endearments, and to all the blandishments of time and sense; so all must die to sin, to self, and sense, who would attain superior bliss. Losses, crosses, disappointments, bereavements, trials—these relax our hold

"The path of sorrow, and [illegible]
Leads to the land where sorrow

In feasting with the King a
heavenly happiness is given.
ness of the heavenly temple
where we meet, and cheers us
than mortal sunshine. The
seraphic lays attunes our so
such as no earthly music can
secrated to such pleasures, ea
of such hours—

"These are the dearest hours
The sweetest joys of all bel

Our condition and circumstances will soon be answerable to it. Then every evil shall have passed away. Every enemy shall have been destroyed. Every benefit shall have been conferred. Every expectation shall have been far surpassed. Now there is happiness in measure; then it will be boundless. Here to lave the stream is exquisite. How overwhelming the immortal joys of the celestial world! Adorable Redeemer!

"If such the sweetness of the stream,
What must the fountain be;
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from thee!"

Of this happiness, in its immortal fulness, we are heirs. Of it, in its essence and properties, we are already the privileged partakers. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and *sorrow* and sighing shall flee away."

Isa. xxxv. 10. The divine presence *with* us, is a sure token of the divine all-sufficiency as available *for* us. It refreshes us when faint; rests us when weary; rallies our flagging energies; and raises our sinking hopes.

"His presence lightens all our cares;
And makes our burdens light;
A word from Him dispels our fears,
And gilds the gloom of night."

The happiness of his saints is only in harmony with the divine nature and character. He is "the ever happy God." Rom. i. 25, ix. 5. It is in pursuance of his eternal purpose and decree. It is consequent upon the perfect government of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the counterpart of the suffering Redeemer's sorrows. It is promised and proclaimed in the everlasting gospel. It is in substance wrought in every renewed heart. It is freely communicated to the *redeemed* and regenerated sinner by the *Holy Ghost* from heaven.



At his table his guests are brought into the presence of the King of saints. They see his face. They hear his voice. They sit at his feet. They lie on his bosom. They are ravished with his smile. They drink into his spirit. They receive the gifts of his hand. They are guided by his eye. They are defended by his arm. They feel the throbbing of his heart. Mutual love is felt. Mutual confidence is cherished. Mutual endearments are exchanged. Mutual sympathy is exercised. Mutual disclosures are made. This is happiness. It is happy to be at peace with God, and to enjoy his favour. It is happy to have all our sins forgiven, and every accusation hushed. It is happy to enjoy an interest in the Saviour's grace and love. It is happy to have antepasts of Heaven, and to be assured of a mansion in the skies. It is happy to triumph over sin, satan, this present evil world, the flesh, law, death and hell. It is happy to possess a peaceful conscience, and a heart at



of the gospel, —
rich supplies of grace—a
throne, a sceptre, and a kin
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not only hereafter, but here,

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"In Thy presence I
I can suffer, I can
Without Thee, I faint
O my Jesus, kee



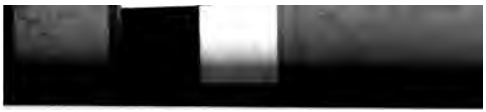
NOVEMBER.

THE BENEDICTION.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of e week, when the doors were shut where the disciples ere assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. nd when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands id his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw e Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto u."—John xx. 19—21.

r our present condition, there is no greater ligious blessing than peace; solid, subantial, and lasting peace; peace of mind id conscience; peace towards each other id peace with God; a peaceable and peaceil disposition. The possession of spiritual eace is a satisfactory evidence of personal odliness. Peace—not indifference, insensility, or stillness. Peace—not the quiet of

ard, nor the calm of the unruffled
e Lord Jesus after his resurrection
himself unto his disciples, speak-
ce. In his lips it was no merely
mentary salutation. It was a royal
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im. Ere he left them his was a legacy
eace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace
give unto you: not as the world giveth,
ve I unto you. Let not your heart be
roubled, neither let it be afraid." John xiv.
27. Here at his table we have Jesus mani-
festing himself unto us also. He shows us
his wounded hands and side. He blesses
his people with peace. Here are we glad
because we too saw the Lord. The
elements are tokens to the communicant
peace made by Christ's death upon the cr
They assure us that Christ crucified is
peace, and that it is no vain expec
that—"The peace of God, which
all understanding, shall keep your he
minds through Christ Jesus." Ep



Phil. iv. 7, The day on which we celebrate the feast is appropriate, and the solemn evening hour. Our meeting together with closed doors, happily no longer from fear of persecution, but for the sake of obtaining uninterrupted quiet, is all in harmony with the "abundance of peace," (Ps. xxxvii. 11) which is here dispensed. Hence we sing—

"How sweet and awful is the place,
With Christ within the doors;
While everlasting love displays,
The choicest of her stores."

"Here every bowel of our God
With soft compassion rolls;
And peace and pardon bought with blood,
Is food for dying souls."

Here therefore every argument presents itself, exciting us to cherish peace in our own bosoms, as also to diffuse it abroad. Not the least consideration is, the difference there is between our condition now that God has whispered peace to our hearts and when we were strangers to its presence and

power. What could be more agonizing *than* the discomposure of a mind, agitated by convictions of sin, oppressed by a sense of guilt, and terrified by constant apprehensions of eternal perdition? What but hell in miniature is such a state of mind? But when sin is pardoned, when guilt is purged away, when an interest in the blood and righteousness of Jesus is enjoyed, when a hope of eternal life is imparted, what can be more comfortable? How calm, how even, how serene, how tranquil, how composed and happy, the mind is then! It is "as the days of heaven upon the earth." Deut. xi. 21. And shall we wilfully interrupt so delightful a state of things, and mar the beauty of the scene, by the excitement of such passions as resentment, envy, hatred, ill-will, and strife? Or shall we recklessly disturb the peace of others, destroying the holy calm which smooths *their* bosoms, by giving vent to malignant *feelings, or by* expressing ourselves in as

bitter words? Let it not be. Peace is too precious to be treated thus, whether in itself or its possessors.

Another consideration is the price peace costs. Heaven must for awhile forego the presence of the Son of God. God must humble himself. Jesus must sorrow, suffer, and be put to death. The Holy Ghost must come and impart it. God could neither give more, nor do more that we may have peace. It had ever engaged his mind. It had entered into all his plans. Shall we not therefore prize it accordingly; and our motto be "with righteousness anything for peace"? Knowing what it is to have no peace; with the symbols before us of its amazing value; with the exquisite enjoyment which its possession affords, we cannot, on any trivial account, relinquish it, or deprive a brother or a sister of it. As the angels at the birth of our Redeemer, so be it our mission to publish and proclaim it "*Glory* to God in the highest, and on ear



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There is no ambiguity in these words. A peaceable and peaceful disposition are as necessary to salvation as any other evidence of our new creation. Zeal for the truth is no justification of sectarian bitterness or party strife. Zeal for orthodoxy is not always an orthodox zeal. Human infirmity is more likely to prevail in such a contest than godly jealousy. Love is the bond of perfectness. The church of Christ calls us to fellowship one with another. According to some it is as though it only sounded the tocsin of war between its various members. It fulminates anathemas only against those who have no part nor lot in the matter. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. x. 16-17. We are drops of the *same wine*: the cup of blessing. We ar

crumbs of the same loaf: the one bread of life from heaven. Be we as his blood, his body. If God can be at peace with us, whose "heavens are not clean in his sight, and who chargeth his angels with folly," Job. iv. 18, it surely can be no such great difficulty to excel in kindliness, forbearance, gentleness of spirit and behaviour towards those to whose sentiments and conduct we may even justly take exception. Be our fellowship a fellowship of peace; endorsing the apostolic benediction—"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen!"

"We are but several parts
Of the same broken bread;
Our body hath its several limbs,
But Jesus is the head.

"Let all our powers be join'd,
His glorious name to raise;
Pleasure and love fill every mind,
And every voice be praise."



DECEMBER.

THE TRIBUTE.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Psa. cxvi. 12—15.

THE death of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be rightly contemplated by his people at his table apart from that eternal life of which his death was the inspiration; and of which in believing on him, we are made the happy partakers. "I am come (said he) that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John x. 10. "Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a co

of wheat fall into the ground and die, abideth alone." John xii. 23-24. W live because he died. We worship him "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who ha abolished death, and hath brought life ar immortality to light through the gospel 2 Tim. i. 10. This was a chief object his incarnation and crucifixion. This Pa the Apostle testifies in writing to those wh lived under "a ministration of death 2 Cor. iii. 7. "Forasmuch then as th children are partakers of flesh and bloo he also himself likewise took part of th same; that through death he might destro him that had the power of death, that i the devil; and deliver them who throug fear of death were all their lifetime subje to bondage." Heb. ii. 14-15.

The dying year reminds us that we to must die. But the anticipation of ou *decease* is no longer fraught with terror. *true Christian* can even long to die. Th *virtue of Christ's* death has gone forth



all who touch him. Nature alone may shrink from the thought of dying; and unquestionably it does. But grace triumphs in nature over all its ill forebodings. Immortality is well-earned at the expense of our mortal dissolution. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 54-57. Turning to the cross the most timid are emboldened. From doubts and fears, those "fiery darts of the wicked one," this is an effectual shield. Looking to a crucified Immanuel the feeblest exultingly sings—

"Hast Thou not given Thy word
To save my soul from death?
And I can trust my Lord
To keep my mortal breath:
I'll go and come, nor fear to die,
Till from on high, thou call me home."

Emblematically of these assuring sentiments we receive this bread and wine. This bread signifies Christ's body; this wine his blood. As we partake of them, so we receive Christ. Living on him, we live for ever. United unto him, and incorporated with him, we cannot but be immortal. We have his own words—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he *that eateth* of this bread shall live for *ever.*" John vi. 53—58. Faith realizes

this vital union of our souls to Christ. We need not fear to die. We may even bear the enraptured testimony of his devoted servant of old—"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Phil. i. 21—23. Already are we dead, and in Christ it is we live. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. iii. 3-4. With death in view we sing—

"My life with His connected stands,
Nor asks a surer ground;
He keeps me in His blessed arms,
Where heaven itself is found."

We may also call to mind, in connection with this topic, the relation which is borne by the throne of grace, at which we bow on *earth*, to the throne of glory, before

which all the redeemed will bow in heaven. Have we not approached the throne of grace? It was through Christ. He raised it. He is the way to it. He invited us to come to it, and helped us to draw near. There he has been all our plea. Through him the Father has approved and blessed us. Having obtained access there we find it our continual resort. As the result we claim the promises—"My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. iv. 19. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. It therefore follows that we must be beatified in the presence of God's excelling glory. The privileges of divine grace in this world are necessarily associated with heavenly glory. *Death does not,* cannot, introduce us "who *have believed* through grace," to the throne

of vengeful justice, but to the throne of blissful glory. The throne of grace has been the place of our appeal; and "a glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." Jer. xvii. 12. Before that throne of glory we shall worship. As the throne of the Mediator, upon it we shall be exalted. Coëval with that throne shall be the excellence and the duration of our bliss. This bread and wine are pledges from our Lord, that this hope "maketh not ashamed." Rom. v. 4-5.

Besides such inferences, our risen and glorified Saviour emphatically declares—"Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. i. 17-18. Do I trust in him? Do I love him? Do I enjoy his friendship? Then to be unduly anxious about my departure from this present evil world is neither to act rightly *towards* my Saviour nor myself. Better

ery way to leave it entirely with him. o, be the circumstances what they may—

"Fearless of hell and ghastly death,
I'd break through every foe;
The wings of love, and arms of faith,
Should bear me conqueror through."

We shall have grace enough to sustain us in dying, whose whole lives have been supported by its constant and unfailing supplies. Ours may be a lingering or sudden death; a painful or an easy departure; but what matter? Death's shafts are stingless, and in Christ's hands. In this, as in all else—"we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Cor. v. 7. "Now the just shall live by faith." Heb. x. 38. Christians are always safe, if not always conscious of it. It is all right with the believer, if not always comfortable. So behind the clouds at nightfall, the setting sun sinks below the distant westerly horizon. As certainly, and equally unseen *to us; that* orb rises upon a new, another *emisphere*—a new, another world. Our



:e, our death, are alike his care. "For ɔne of us liveth to himself, and no an dieth to himself. For whether we ɾe, we live unto the Lord; and whether ə die, we die unto the Lord: whether we ɾe therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ɔr to this end Christ both died, and rose, ıd revived, that he might be Lord, both the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 7-9.

"He that formed me in the womb,
He shall guide me to the tomb;
All my times shall ever be
Ordered by His wise decree.

"Plagues and deaths around me fly;
Till He bids I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit;
Till the God of love sees fit.

"O Thou, gracious, wise, and just,
In Thy hands my life I trust;
Have I somewhat dearer still?
I resign it to Thy will."



CONCLUSION

THE HYMN.

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went the mount of Olives."—Matt. xxvi. 30.

THIS is about the only recorded instance the Lord Jesus and his disciples lift their voices in song. What they

Only a century or so ago did singing begin to be of universal practice in the public worship of Christian congregations. But from time immemorial it has been usual for saints to sing a hymn when assembled to break bread. Suitableness, simplicity, sincerity, are the proper characteristics of their psalmody as communicants at such a festive celebration. Such music is no common means of grace. For music is the melody of mind, and song its minstrel. Of heavenly birth, it has a mission to mankind. The choral strain, the sacred concert, how fitted to inspire the harmonies of the new and better heart. As conducted by the Saviour how sweet, how blessed, how acceptable the church's song—

"Saints and angels, join'd in concert,
Sing the praises of the Lamb;
While the blissful seats of heaven
Sweetly echo with His name!
Hallelujah!
Sinners here may sing the same."



The treachery of Judas, and his desertion and apostasy; the sorrow of the eleven at having so soon to part with their Master and Lord; the trouble which broke in upon his own peaceful and devoted spirit; all failed to hush the Saviour's psalm. Earth and hell unite in vain to hinder the conclusion in immortal song of the faultless service of the Son of God on earth.

Thus Zion's King manifested his oneness with his saints. Thus with his disciples he worshipped God. Thus together they celebrated the praises of the sacrificial offering for sin. Thus in anticipation they gratefully acknowledged the glorious achievements of Redeeming grace and love. Thus he regaled his delighted guests with the heavenly music of his soul. Thus did they cheerfully refresh their spirits for tribulation and labour. Thus the church's Head honoured and adopted the institutions of the *house of God.* Thus the Bridegroom inaugurated and foreshadowed the festive joys of

the final Marriage Supper. Thus did their Messiah endorse the inspired prophecy which the sweet singer of Israel was wont to sing on his behalf—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Heb. ii. 12. (quoted from Psa. xxii. 22-26.) The requiem was it of the slain in truth's conflicts; sung by the Captain of our Salvation, and the apostolic band, themselves its foremost witnesses? It was the war-song of the Lord of hosts, "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Psa. xxiv. 8. It was the pæan of the conqueror in the foresight of a glorious victory.

So strung the Mediator his neglected harp, for the resumption of the heavenly concert; the choirs of his father's house having paused in their gladsome minstrelsy, while the Son of David should accomplish his mission to our ruined race. So alternated the song of the supper, and the groan

of the garden, in the experience of David's Lord. So clung to him, and sung in concert with him, at his table, the true but timid eleven; who on Mount Olivet should forsake their liege, and flee abashed away. So religion's martyr exchanges in an hour its holy pleasures for spiritual desertion, and a torturous, murderous death. So near to heaven and its long-desired sabbath, is earth's weary, patient, pilgrim; when a further probation, and a still more terrific struggle with the powers of darkness suddenly intervene.

Although their demand be not obligatory who require of us mirth, "saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion," let us no more querulously answer them—"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Ps. cxxxvii. 3-4. The Lord himself when in exile sung; and we "his banished" (2 Sam. xiv. 14) also do well to sing. So, *amid the* rebukes of the Pharisees, the *disciples not* many hours before had sung,

Jesus himself declaring—"If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Luke xix. 40. We are away to our Fatherland, to sing for aye in heaven. Its harps and songs already by faith we hear, and in sympathy re-echo. Tears over. Songs ever. Always alleluia! Jesus sings, the angels sing, and sweetly sing the saints, for ever! As the vernal grove lives in the sunshine, all vocal with the symphonies of ten thousand winged warblers; so yon fair Paradise redeemed, regained, shall be beauteous and astir with everlasting joy. "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Isa. li. 3.

"Sing we then in Jesu's name,
Now as yesterday the same;
One in every time and place,
Full of mercy, truth, and grace.


FINIS.





